

REVIEWS

SURGICAL TREATMENT. By JAMES PETER WARBASSE, Formerly Attending Surgeon to the Methodist Episcopal Hospital, Brooklyn, New York. Volume 1. Pp. 899; 699 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1918.

THE author here presents the first volume of a large three-volume work on surgical treatment. Judging the prospective two volumes by this one, we recognize a very ambitious effort and one worthy of the tremendous amount of work it has required. The outstanding feature is that it is a one-man production in contrast to the usual system of surgery by many authors. The one-time common and popular text-book of surgery by one author seems to have lost its hold on the profession, with a few noteworthy exceptions. Even the large systems by many authors, most of whom work and write along special lines, do not seem to maintain their popularity through more than a few editions, evidently because they cannot keep abreast of the important advances in surgery. The progressive surgeon must be familiar with the original literature as it appears in the journals. Even in the matter of surgical treatment alone, one not infrequently fails to realize how difficult it is to condense this amount of material, or the best of it, into the narrow confines of three volumes. Whatever their defects, such books are very essential in the life of the busy surgeon for ready reference and reasonably reliable guidance, and there is much to be said for this unusual one-man system. Duplication and overlapping of subjects is largely avoided. Many noted writers on special branches of surgery have displayed much difficulty in determining what the average physician and general surgeon need most. Warbasse shows not only a remarkable capacity for absorbing the literature himself, but for presenting its essential features in such a form that the ordinary reader may absorb it also.

A striking general feature is the wide area covered with a noteworthy attention to detail. In view of the great number of surgical contributions, due to the war needs and irrespective of the war, the author displays an unusual ability to be brief, comprehensive and clear in his summaries of this material. The general excellence of the work and of the numerous illustrations make it difficult to particularize concerning individual features. The reviewer, however,

cannot agree with the author in all things. He would criticize, for instance, Fig. 215, on page 365, which shows digital pressure being made on the femoral artery about under the spine of the pubis instead of under the middle of Ponpart's ligament. All surgeons will not agree that "ordinarily the reduction of a fracture is simple and satisfactory." A skiagraphic illustration of a fracture of the shafts of say both bones of the leg, with considerable overlapping of the fragments before reduction, and a similar illustration of the same fracture showing reduction of the deformity would have been more convincing. Diagrammatic illustrations do not satisfy. Compressing the artery supplying the bone, the use of drugs or of anemia by the ischemic rubber bandage, to aid the reduction by relaxing the muscles, will not appeal strongly to the experienced surgeon. That fractures of the greater tuberosity of the humerus and of the head and neck of the radius are rare is not supported by the roentgen-ray evidence. Fig. 475, on page 633, is evidently copied from one which appeared elsewhere a few years ago, and its reappearance is unfortunate. It illustrates an operation for recurrent dislocation of the shoulder that never was done and never will be, because the anatomical conditions illustrated do not exist. To the uninitiated it is alluring, but if followed will prove bitterly disappointing.

But these are trifles in a great mass of up-to-date, readily digestible, well coördinated, surgical therapeutic facts, very valuable and necessary to the practising surgeon. The author is to be congratulated on the magnitude and importance of the work he has accomplished. The surgeon and practising physician are also to be congratulated because of the opportunity it affords of finding what they need most of modern surgical knowledge so arranged and illustrated that it is readily accessible.

T. T. T.

FORCED MOVEMENTS, TROPISMS AND ANIMAL CONDUCT. By JACQUES LOEB, Member of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Pp. 209; 42 illustrations. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1918.

This is the first of a projected series of monographs on general physiology and experimental biology by American writers. It is now thirty years ago since the author of this book put forward his well-known theory of tropisms or forced movements in regard to animal behavior. The idea was first suggested to him by observing the behavior of plants, such as stems bending toward the light of a window or the growing ivy stem inclining toward a solid support. By careful experimental procedures he found the behavior of lower animals to be similarly governed by external forces. To these forces he applied the same terms as had been used in plant physi-

ology, as heliotropism, galvanotropism, geotropism, etc. In the interval since the idea was first advanced many investigators have worked upon the lines which the author then indicated. This is attested to by the 554 references to literature at the end of the book. These and the discussion of their results, which the book contains, will serve as a source of collected information and of reference to all those interested in the subject. W. H. F. A.

THE HUMAN SKELETON. AN INTERPRETATION. By HERBERT E. WALTER, Associate Professor of Biology, Brown University. Pp. 214; 174 illustrations. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918.

To those whose early study of the human skeleton was coincident with the first strenuous months of their medical education, this simple presentation will serve to give a new viewpoint. Instead of time-honored descriptions and hackneyed expressions, the author uses every-day language in his attempt to inject life into the dry bones. Perhaps some may disapprove of his partly humorous method of handling scientific facts. His interpretation is largely based upon evolutionary lines, or, to use one of the author's own expressions, "the present skeleton is only the latest model," and is bound in the future to undergo many modifications. To show the directions in which the various parts of the skeleton are evolving, he draws largely upon comparative anatomy and embryology. The result is a readable book, in which the more general and larger aspects of the subject are emphasized to the exclusion of much of the usual minutiae. W. H. F. A.